THE STUDY OF ART IN ENGLAND.

THE following are portions of an address delivered at the opening of the North London School for Drawing, by Mr. Cave Thomas, the head master:—

Let it not be imagined, when deploring the dearth of opportunities for educating taste in this country, I am giving way to that unpatriotic depreciation of British talent so often indulged in. No: this sentiment emanates from a public uneducated in art, whose taste is yet in its infancy and unable to run alone, clutching with trepidation any support, even that of corrupt fashion. To this untutored condition we must attribute the neglect of native talent, the neglect of our fine art manufactures, the neglect of art education. The long and weary conflict with adverse circumstances of some of our greatest artists has been a fate so common, that it has come to be considered an essential passport to fame. The public forgets, that in neglecting genius it compels genius to neglect it: both are sufferers, but the public the greater, losing, as it does, all those years of unworthy employ to which it dooms genius in the infancy of its knowledge.

To an uneducated, and therefore indiscriminating, public, is also to be attributed the neglect of our art manufactures, when they had attained that high position some years since promoted by the enterprise and liberality of Messrs. Rundell and Bridge, Wedgwood, and a few others,—suffering the manufactures of the precious metals and earthenware gradually to degenerate into foreign fashions, or, rather, clumsy imitations of foreign fashions, and to which we may also attribute the incompleteness and trashiness of our fancy manufactures generally.

It has been the apathy of the public mind on matters of taste, too, which has caused the neglect of this branch of education in the schools and colleges of Great Britain, and of the establishment of suburban art schools. It is easy to say that the English manufacturer and artisan are deficient in taste; but only let the exhibition of it be demanded by discriminating wealth, and we vouch for a favourable result—that it will soon be responded to. I feel confident there is a mass of latent talent in this country awaiting more favourable circumstances to burst into flame. It is demand which influences the exercise of the faculties of that portion of the public dependent on the hire of wealth for its daily bread, and labour naturally asks why it should neglect the readier sources of employ to cultivate higher faculties, having little means and still less opportunities of doing so.

We are gratified, in contemplating the state of Great Britain at the present time, to find there are not wanting unmistakeable signs of the dawn of a new era, even in matters of taste. Provincial schools of design and art exhibitions are becoming numerous—journals that never touched upon art, are now treating it as an important matter—art-unions are springing up—illustrated works are permeating the reading world, and manufacturers are employing in some few cases English, but more commonly German and French designers, of whom there are many hundreds in this country. This latter fact ought to warn you against being supine, and incite you to make the best use of the opportunities now offered for improving your tastes, seeing that the advantages which the French and German workmen derive from their local art-schools enable them to respond to the caprices of fashion even, with more ability than yourselves, and lead to their preference, to the detriment of national labour, which is diminished still further by the want of discriminating taste in the public, which allows itto be contented with slight work, requiring perhaps one-half or one-third the time necessary to perfection. This fact would hardly be worthy of notice if of rare occurrence; but when we witness the extent to which the system prevails, and its effects, it becomes a matter too important to be passed over. When we consider that a large proportion of the manufactures of this country are produced in half the time they ought to be, it is evident that in any given space of time they would require twice as much labour to perfect them. Now, as a given number of men could not very well double their hours of employ if perfection were required, it would be necessary to double the number of employed, a circumstance which could not fail to act favourably on an overstocked labour-market. We do not confine our remarks, in this instance, to art manufactures only, but to manufactures generally; *for in the dignity of perfection all human works are closely allied.*

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I have remarked upon the want of taste and the means of creating taste,—the disadvantage it is, and is likely to be, to the commonwealth in a mercantile point of view; but perhaps I have not yet laid sufficient stress on the pernicious and imperfect system of education from which the training of the two higher senses is discarded, and from which all these disadvantages proceed. Are they educated at Oxford and Cambridge? The answer is, No. Are they at any of our public schools, or schools generally? The answer is again, No. Does that deserve to be called education which leaves half our powers neglected? I answer, No. * * * * * It is my firm conviction that the care which the minute and faithful delineation of an object requires is directly calculated to form those habits and tastes which are in intimate connection with private happiness, and are wanting to reform some traits of Vandalism in our national manners. If so, it is of paramount importance that the arts of design should receive due consideration in the curriculum of education, more especially of the less wealthy classes,—for, besides placing within their reach the pleasure derivable from the contemplation of graceful forms, it would contribute to secure that attention to the person and the dwelling which is so essential an element in domestic happiness, strengthening also that sense of self respect which operates as a principle of repulsion to vulgarity and vice, and of attraction to courtesy and virtue. It is not, perhaps, the accomplishment itself that is of so much moment to the masses, but the training of the faculties and feelings incident to it to apprehend and appreciate things lovely, that is important. The habit is a security against the formation of vulgar manners, and against familiarity with disgusting scenes; and, taken into the economy of household life, it may throw an outward adornment over homes of rusticity and artisan employ, the moral influence of which is an end worth gaining.

SIGHTS AND SCENERY.

Vauxhall Gardens.—Falke de Breauté, who married Margaret, Earl Baldwin's mother, and built a mansion, or hall, in South Lambeth, little thought "Faukes-hall" would give name to the large district that now bears it, and that through the "New Spring Garden," formed there in 1661 ("a pretty contrived plantation," says Evelyn, in that year), it would gain a world-wide reputation.

According to Mr. Fillingham, who has made an extraordinary collection of documents relating to Vauxhall, or Fox-hall, the title of Spring Garden was continued till 1785; and fireworks began to be exhibited there about 1798.

Some of the old descriptions of the gardens would serve now: and we never saw the place looking better than it did a few nights ago, when we walked in to see the pictorial representation of the Kremlin at Moscow, which, as a fast young friend who was there said, gives, when the fireworks are going off, quite a new idea of the domestic habits of the inhabitants of Moscow. It is, nevertheless, effective for its purpose. To note what happened to us after, we might quote what Pepys said when he went there as long ago as 1668, with Harry Killigrew and young Newport,—"And so to supper in an arbour, but, Lord! their mad talk did make my heart ake."

Let us add, for the advantage of those who painted the picture, as well as of the visitors, that a church was built in the Kremlin in 1326; the "Granite Palace" rose in 1487; the clock tower of Ivan Valiki in 1600, at which time there were thirty-five churches in the Kremlin.

Cremorne Gardens.—What may be done by the scene-painter towards making an ugly structure fair to the sight may be seen here. Under the alliterative title of "The Polychrome Palace of Pavia," a very respectable piece of tea-garden painting, puts another face upon an eyesore. The gardens themselves are very pretty, and apparently well conducted. The platform wants the carpenter.

At the *Adelphi Theatre*, Strand, Victor Hugo's "Notre Dame," which has done so much for the preservation of ancient buildings, is made the ground work of a new "Esmeralda," a broad piece of fun with two or three very striking scenes.

At the *Strand Theatre*, "The Philosopher's Stone" has two architectural scenes, shewing very considerable ability on the part of the artist, but marred by the want of knowledge of perspective. In the sixteenth century chamber-scene, for example (we are speaking to the artist for his own sake), the lines of the side of the chimney-piece run altogether differently from the lines of the room, with which they should range.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY.

THE Health Commissioners, in their elaborate report on this momentous question, have proposed a scheme for the supply of pure soft water to the metropolis that must be admitted to have the merit of boldness and originality at least, if not of feasibility.

Deprecating the various evils inherent in the present radically vicious system, and especially the expensive and insalubrious hardness of the water supplied, as well as its injurious impurity from decompositive and other animal and vegetable impregnations, the intermittency of its supply, and the consequent waste of a proportion of it estimated from careful inquiries to be no less than 50 per cent. of the whole amount of 45,000,000 gallons a-day, supplied to the 288,000 houses in the metropolis, or rather to 270,000 only of these, causing not only unhealthy damp but serious dilapidations,—the commissioners, founding their scheme on the unanimous opinion of the engineering inspectors and others, on its partial practice already successfully carried out in Lancashire and elsewhere, and on the Ordnance survey, as well as on chemical analysis of the properties of 424 specimens of water from different sources, and other evidence,—now propose to supply the metropolis with an amount of soft and pure water equivalent to twice the *actual* consumption, exclusive of what is expended in worse than useless waste,—the proposed supply to be collected from the rain drainage of an area of 100 to 150 square miles of gathering ground, otherwise nearly useless, such as that lying east and west of a line extending from Bagshot to Farnham. The cost of the whole scheme, it is estimated, would be about one million sterling, and the metropolis could thus be supplied with pure soft, filtered, aerated, and, in fact, distilled water, in profuse abundance, though without waste, at the rate of 2d. a-week per tenement.

For the prevention of the enormous waste which has been proved to prevail under present circumstances, for the prompt extinction of fires without engines, and for other and important purposes, sanitary and otherwise,—it is proposed to substitute a constant supply at high pressure, so as to obviate the necessity of cisterns, barrels, &c., and to combine, ultimately, the system of drainage with that of supply, substituting tubular drains of small calibre, through which the soil and waste water will force their way, without opportunity of deposit, in place of the present more capacious outlets, which not only favour such deposits, but necessitate an immense waste of water in flushing, which it is the desire of the commission to do away with, more especially as the sewage, they conceive, can never be manageably turned to useful account on the great scale, nor the Thames purified, so long as it is allowed to continue. As to the purification of the Thames water, however, it is considered that even were that at once accomplished, it would not be desirable to supply the metropolis from such a source, the hardness of the water being a sufficient reason for rejecting it. As it is, the commission deem it an urgent duty to compel the abandonment of its use altogether as quickly as possible.

The saving derivable from a substitution of soft for hard water, even in the mere article of soap, or tea, is something quite enormous. The whole expense of washing alone is esti-

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